

# A new subspecies of Grey-cheeked Nunlet *Nonnula ruficapilla* from Brazilian Amazonia

by Fernando C. Novaes

Received 31 January 1991

According to Meyer de Schauensee (1966) the geographical distribution of *Nonnula ruficapilla* includes Colombia (from the northern Pacific coast east through the Caribbean lowlands to Santa Marta and the middle Magdalena valley), eastern Peru (Río Napo south to the Marcapata valley) and Brazilian Amazonia (Juruá, upper Guaporé and upper Paraguay rivers). More recent records have extended the Brazilian range far to east to the Tocantins river valley. Here, I follow Wetmore (1988), who restricts the geographical range of *N. ruficapilla* to Peru and Brazilian Amazonia. *N. frontalis* from Colombia is believed to be a distinct species.

According to Peters (1948) there are three recognizable subspecies of *N. ruficapilla*: *N. r. rufipectus* (Río Napo, Peru), *N. r. ruficapilla* (Juruá, Huallaga, Ucayali rivers) and *N. r. nattereri* (Río Guaporé and upper Paraguay). These subspecies have been based on geographical variation in colour pattern. *N. r. rufipectus* is richly and darkly coloured on both upper and under parts, while *N. r. ruficapilla* is lighter and *N. r. nattereri* is the lightest in colour. Eastwards from the Xingu river basin, *nattereri* gradually becomes duller in colour, reaching its dullest form in the Tocantins river basin. This variation separates the Tocantins form, which may be known by the following name, from all other geographical forms of *N. ruficapilla*. Capitalized colour names with numbers indicate direct comparison with Smithe's (1975, 1981) *Naturalist's Color Guide*.

## ***Nonnula ruficapilla inundata* subsp. nov.**

*Type.* MG 36.071; female; Pará, rio Tocantins, left bank, 12 km south of Jacundá (town), 04°35'S, 49°34'W; 12 May 1984, collected during a Goeldi Museum expedition.

*Diagnosis.* Differs from *N. r. nattereri*, the nearest geographical form, by having the throat and breast Amber (36) instead of Yellow Ochre (123 C); upper parts (back and tail) more olivaceous nearly Olive Brown (28) instead of Raw Umber (123), belly darker, washed with yellowish Buff Yellow (53) whereas in *nattereri* this is closest to Cream Colour (54); sides of head, neck and body dark greyish, Medium Neutral Grey (84) instead of Light Neutral Grey (85). Differs from *N. r. ruficapilla* chiefly in the dark colour of the throat and breast Amber (36) instead of Clay Colour (123 B).

*Distribution.* Known only from the type locality.

*Measurements and colour of soft parts.* Exposed culmen 23.2; culmen from nostril 19.3; culmen from base 27.3; wing 69; tail 63.7; tarsus 11.8 mm. Iris brown; circum-orbital skin pale red; maxilla black, base bluish-grey; mandible bluish-grey with black tip; weight 16.5 g.

*Remarks.* The specimens studied show that *N. r. nattereri* is not restricted to the Guaporé basin and upper Paraguay river, but that its distribution extends eastwards as far as the Xingu and Tapajós river basins. The birds from the Tapajós and Xingu basins are not as pale as those from the Guaporé and Paraguay, however, although there is a gradual rather than an abrupt colour change, suggesting intra-subspecific variation within *nattereri* rather than an intermediate between *nattereri* and *inundata*.

#### *Specimens examined*

*N. r. ruficapilla.* **Amazonas**, rio Javari, Estirão do Ecuador, 1 female, 1 female (MN), rio Juruá, 1 female (MZUSP). **Rondônia**, rio Jiparanã, cachoeira Nazaré, 1 female.

*N. r. nattereri.* **Mato Grosso**, São Luiz de Cáceres, 1 male juv. (MZUSP), Salto do Sepotuba (rio Sepotuba), 1 (sex ?) (MN), Baixo rio Kuluene, Jacaré (12°53'S, 52°50'W), 2 males (MN), 2 females (MN), alto rio Xingú, Diauarum (11°25'S, 53°15'W), 1 female (MN), rio Sete de Setembro, Garapú (12°00'S, 52°37'W), 1 male (MN), 1 female (MZUSP), rio Peixoto de Azevedo, Fazenda São José (10°10'S, 54°50'W), 1 female. **Pará**, Rio Tapajós, Lago Araipá, 1 female (MZUSP), Rio Tapajós, Fordlandia, 1 male (MZUSP).

*N. r. inundata.* **Pará**, Rio Tocantins (left bank), 12 km, south of Jacundá (Type), 1 female.

#### Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the curators of the following collections for the examination of specimens: Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo (MZUSP) and Museu Nacional, Rio de Janeiro (MN); and to Dr Stephen Ferrari for help with the revision of the English text.

#### References:

- Peters, J. L. 1948. Check-list of Birds of the World. Vol. 6. Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard.  
Meyer de Schauensee, R. 1966. *The Species of Birds of South America and their Distribution*. Livingston Publ. Co., Narberth, Pa.  
Smithe, F. B. 1975. (Part 1); 1981 (Part 2). *Naturalist's Color Guide*. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., New York.  
Wetmore, A. 1968. *The Birds of the Republic of Panama*. Vol. 2. Smithsonian Inst. Press, Washington.

*Address:* F. C. Novaes, Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi, Departamento de Zoologia, C.P. 399, 66040 Belém, Pará, Brazil.